

Abstract Food Integrity NANTES

Key success factors for an information sharing system to prevent and detect food integrity issues: insights from a stakeholder consultation

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One of the biggest challenges facing the food industry is assuring food integrity (FI). Dealing with complex FI-issues requires a multi-dimensional approach. Preventive actions and early reactive responses are key for the food supply chain. Information sharing could facilitate the identification and prevention of FI-issues. This study investigates attitudes towards a food integrity information sharing system (FIISS) among stakeholders in the European food supply chain. Insights into stakeholders' interest to participate and their conditions for joining a FIISS are assessed.

The stakeholders consultation consisted of three rounds. During the first round, a total of 119 food industry stakeholders (46% SMEs) – covering all major food sectors susceptible to FI-issues – participated in an online quantitative survey between November 2017 and February 2018. The second round, an online qualitative feedback survey in which the findings were presented, received feedback from 61 stakeholders from industry, authorities and research. In May 2018, 37 stakeholders discussed the results in further detail during an interactive workshop.

Three distinct groups of industry stakeholders were identified based on reported frequency of occurrence of and likelihood of detecting FI-issues. Food industry stakeholders strongly support the concept of a FIISS with an attitude score of 4.49 (S.D.=0.57) on a 5-point scale; and their willingness to participate is high (81%). Consensus exists regarding the advantages a FIISS can yield towards prevention and detection. Four key success factors for a FIISS are defined. A food safety authority (74%) or a newly established organisation (84%) were believed to be the most suitable third parties to organise a FIISS. Reactions diverged concerning the required level of transparency, the type of data stakeholders might be willing to share in a FIISS and the role authorities can have within a FIISS.